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ABSTRACT

A task force consisting of individuals representing business, industry, government, public and private sector agencies, higher education, and elementary and secondary education was convened in September 1982 to recommend actions to insure that excellent teachers are attracted to and retained in Connecticut's classrooms. To that end, participants suggested that (1) teachers' starting salaries be made competitive with salaries earned by persons in the private sector with comparable skills; (2) salaries of teachers and administrators be comparable with those earned by individuals in the private sector with similar training, experience, and expertise; (3) the state and local boards of education establish career ladders recognizing the expertise and performance of teachers; (4) districts enact policies encouraging the retention of quality teachers; (5) funds be provided to create or improve professional development programs for educational personnel; (6) a statewide system of cooperative efforts between business and education be established; (7) steps be taken to attract academically superior high school and college students into the teaching profession and to provide them with teacher preparation programs of high quality; and (8) resources be allocated for a public information campaign aimed at improving the public image of the teaching profession. (Names of participants and titles of research reports presented to the task force are listed.) (RH)

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A REPORT OF THE DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS TASK FORCE ON QUALITY TEACHING

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September 1983

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UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

September 20, 1983

To the Citizens of the State of Connecticut:

When I accepted the Chairmanship of the Distinguished Citizens Task Force on Quality Teaching, the present furor concerning our nation's public schools had not yet erupted. As the Task Force conducted its deliberations in the autumn of 1982 and the spring of 1983, that furor reached epic proportions.

When the Task Force held its initial meeting in September of last year, we seemed to be facing an uphill battle in convincing the people of Connecticut that their education system was in serious trouble. Now that we have completed our report, the problem seems to be that its recommendations have already been anticipated by so many discussions held in so many states, and by the publicity that educational reform has received in the American media.

My own hope is that the efforts we have made on the Task Force will be seen as complementary to those made by other committees, commissions and concerned groups. Nothing can change the fact that Connecticut is a very special state with very individual challenges, problems and resources. Our economy is "education-based" to an extent that larger and more populous states, rich in natural resources and climatic advantages, cannot duplicate.

It has been a very great pleasure for me to chair the Task Force. Its members have proven to be distinguished in fact and function as well as in reputation. Special thanks are owed to Mr. Mark Shedd, former Commissioner of Education, who provided the initial impetus for the Task Force and gave it his loyal support.

I transmit the Task Force's report to you with the knowledge that hard work went into it and the hope that you will find it a useful basis for action.

Sincerely,

Stephen Joel Trachtenberg

Stephen J. Trachtenberg
President

INTRODUCTION

This report is being submitted at a critical moment in the history of American education. Not since the launching of Sputnik in 1957 has there been so nationwide a concern with the quality of education and with the adverse consequences for the United States if it is not improved. This concern is exemplified by the many recent reports and studies published by national commissions and other groups.

The Distinguished Citizens Task Force on Quality Teaching, consisting of individuals representing business, industry, government, public and private sector agencies, higher education, and elementary and secondary education, was convened in September, 1982. Its specific charge was to make recommendations on the actions needed to ensure that the most talented, most sensitive and most skillful teachers are attracted to and retained in our classrooms.

The focus of this charge does not suggest, however, that the Task Force has been unmindful of other areas of vital concern. The Task Force believes that the consideration of other issues—including curriculum requirements, standards and expectations for children, teacher certification requirements, and parental support and involvement—is essential to the pursuit of educational excellence. However, the single most important factor in the education of children is the quality of teaching, and it is to the improvement of this quality that the Task Force has addressed its efforts during the past year.

The Task Force is well aware that Connecticut's reputation for excellence in education has attracted business and industry to the State. It believes that Connecticut has many excellent teachers. At the same time, the Task Force's deliberations made it clear that the State's educational system is in serious trouble—in ways that are bound to impact on Connecticut's economic health and growth.

The Task Force's eight recommendations focus on immediate and concrete steps that must be taken in order to reverse this pattern. Some, but not all, of these recommendations require substantial investments of money. It will be the task of the constituents of our education system—citizens, business and industry, municipalities, and the state and federal governments—to see to it that Connecticut has the means to meet these serious educational and economic challenges.

Recommendation I

That Teachers' Starting Salaries be Made Competitive With Salaries Earned by Persons With Comparable Skills in the Private Sector.

In 1982-83, the starting salary for a teacher with a B.A. degree was between $11,000 and $12,000 in every Connecticut county except Fairfield, where starting salaries averaged $12,980. At the same time, entry level salaries for those with B.A. degrees were, on average, $18,540 in accounting, $23,000 in civil engineering, $17,628 in business administration, $22,896 in computer science, and $15,396 for all those graduating with humanities majors.

Noncompetitive starting salaries make it almost impossible for school districts in Connecticut to attract a sufficient number of talented teachers, especially in mathematics and science. College graduates, attracted by higher wages and broader professional opportunities, select positions in business and industry. For example, in 1981-82, the number of teaching certificates issued in mathematics was 28, down 26% from the previous year, while in the same year the total number of teaching certificates issued for all science subjects was 62, down 11% from the previous year. There was *not a single candidate* for a teaching certificate in physics.

Non-competitive starting salaries reduce the number of people who select teaching as a career. They also reduce the level of quality among those who *do* select teaching. In his report to the Task Force, Prof. Timothy Weaver of Boston University documents the fact that general skill levels in mathematics and English, for those entering teaching, are well below those of people entering other professions. While this has been true for years, the relative disparity has increased markedly during the last decade.

If starting salaries are not increased significantly, this pattern will be perpetuated. Vacancies in subject areas of critical importance to Connecticut's youth and to Connecticut's economy will escalate, while the quality of those entering the teaching profession will decline.

To reverse this pattern, Connecticut must send a clear signal to its high school and college students indicating that teaching *is* a viable profession, with salary and professional rewards comparable to those in other professions. If the diversion of qualified young people from teaching is to be halted, they must be convinced that they can have financially and professionally rewarding careers in education.

Increasing starting salaries *is* a challenge in an era of fiscal austerity, but the Task Force concludes that such an increase is absolutely essential to quality teaching.

Recommendation 2

That Salaries of Experienced Teachers and Administrators be Comparable to Those Earned by Individuals With Similar Training, Experience and Expertise in the Private Sector.

Non-competitive salaries for experienced school personnel have important negative effects on the quality of teaching and cause many teachers and administrators to leave the profession. According to the Connecticut Education Association, 400 more teachers withdrew from the State's teacher retirement system in 1981-82 than in 1977-78, an increase of 25% over the previous four years. Mary Ellen Stanwick, in a report to the Task Force, concludes that "inadequate salaries are causing increasing numbers of teachers to seek other careers." Often, it is the most able teachers and administrators who are leaving.

Non-competitive salaries cause excessive turnover in teacher ranks. They are also a major cause of dissatisfaction among teachers who do not resign. Dennis Turk and Mark Litt of Yale University, in a study of Connecticut high school teachers, found that of 60 problems frequently cited as sources of teacher dissatisfaction, the three most often mentioned were inadequate salaries, the low status of the teaching profession, and too much paper work. A poll taken by the National Education Association in 1981 showed that teacher dissatisfaction is widespread in today's schools. It indicated that "37% of today's teachers say they are dissatisfied with their current position, 40% say they have no intention to remain in teaching until retirement, and 45% report they probably (32%) or definitely (13%) would not become a teacher if they could start again."

The Task Force believes that the present quality of education is inextricably linked to and dependent upon the quality of our teachers. By increasing the salaries of experienced teachers, personnel turnover and employee dissatisfaction will be reduced in the short run. In the long run, the quality of education will be improved, thereby helping to restore the public's confidence in its schools.

The following steps to improve the salaries of all teachers are recommended:

1. Local boards of education should make the improvement of the salaries of teachers a priority issue.
2. The State must fully fund the Guaranteed Tax Base, with the additional monies targeted toward the improvement of teachers' salaries.
3. Funds from State and Federal categorical aid programs should, where allowable, be directed toward the improvement of teacher salaries.
4. The Federal Government must once again play a greater financial role in the support of education and, through its programs, provide additional income for teachers.

Recommendation 3

That the State Board of Education and Local Boards of Education Establish Career Ladders that will Recognize the Expertise and Performance of Teachers.

Teaching as a profession provides few formal opportunities for classroom personnel to be recognized for their skills and talents. At the same time, teaching also provides few incentives for personnel to increase their level of responsibility or to diversify their skills. Sadly, the teaching profession at the present time does not recognize its own competent performers and does not systematically nurture their development.

One extremely promising effort being developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education is the establishment of a certification continuum wherein exemplary teachers will be recognized. The last step in the continuum, the Master Teacher, will formally recognize teachers who are superior in their craft as outstanding teachers of students, as teachers of other teachers, and as learners in their own right. Financial recognition for Master Teachers by the State and by local school districts is essential.

In addition to recognizing and compensating Master Teachers, concrete efforts to institute career ladders in Connecticut public schools must be launched. Carol MacElwee, in her report to the Task Force, notes that there are many effective career ladder plans in business and industry that may be appropriate to education. The State Department of Education, in conjunction with local school boards and professional organizations, must explore these career ladders and develop options that can be adapted by local districts.

The development of career ladders is one way local school districts can provide additional compensation for excellence in teaching. Beyond identifying and disseminating information about career ladders, the State Board of Education should: (1) provide incentives to districts which decide to implement career ladder alternatives; (2) identify effective evaluation procedures for individuals as they advance on career ladders; and (3) identify criteria for evaluating which types of career ladders are most successful.

Recommendation 4

That Connecticut School Districts Enact Specific Policies to Encourage the Retention of Quality Teachers, Including Summer Work, Flexible Employment and Benefit Options, Reduction of Stressful Conditions, and the Return of Retired Teachers to the Classroom.

In the past two decades, American employers in both the private and public sectors have experimented with a number of work schedule and benefit options that have proven successful when properly administered. Some scheduling options which may be of significance for school districts as a means of retaining teachers in the classroom are:

SUMMER WORK. Teachers have little time to do more than carry out basic instructional responsibilities. Frequently, however, it is precisely their knowledge and expertise that is needed to modify curriculum and make improvements in instructional practice. If teachers who so desired could be employed by school districts during the summer months to work on projects directly related to the improvement of instruction, then teachers' valuable expertise would be used and the curriculum would be invigorated.

FLEXITIME or FLEXTIME. This arrangement makes it possible for an individual to schedule his or her weekly work hours in a way that may differ from those of others within the same organization. In the private sector it is sometimes possible for a person to work at significantly different hours from the prevailing norm. In elementary and high schools, narrower variations will be imposed by the fact that students are present at prescribed hours.

JOB SHARING. This practice allows two individuals to share a single position and divide its responsibilities, salary, and fringe benefits between them. Job sharing can be used effectively to accommodate the special needs of those teachers who prefer not to work full-time. It can also be used to couple the work of a new teacher with that of a master or pre-retirement teacher.

PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT. Generally, the prevailing attitude toward the hiring of part-time personnel within a school district has been negative. This attitude should be reexamined with respect to teaching in general and with respect to mathematics, science and other areas in which it is becoming increasingly difficult to hire full-time teachers.

Just as flexibility in work schedules is an incentive to retaining quality teachers, providing options in benefit packages is important to meeting the diverse needs of school personnel. Business and industry, recognizing that employees have different personal needs, have successfully created a flexible benefit system without increasing the total cost of the package. In what is often called a "cafeteria" approach to benefits, employees are given the option of choosing only those benefits that best meet their needs, so that a young mother might choose child care reimbursement while an older employee might elect comprehensive medical coverage.

Connecticut school districts may be unable to provide complete flexibility of benefits, but the Task Force strongly urges exploration of benefit arrangements more flexible than those now prevailing. The employee assistance plans now routinely provided in business and industry should also be studied to see if they can be adapted to the needs and resources of Connecticut's school districts.

Further, if districts hope to retain quality personnel, they need to address other stress factors cited by teachers. Reducing paper work and other non-teaching demands will free teachers to pursue academic competence and excellence in their own teaching. Teachers must be accorded autonomy from burdensome local, state and federal regulations, and from excessive reporting requirements. Teachers must also be given more responsibility in making decisions about school life in conjunction with administrators and community representatives.

Particularly neglected resources in education are retired teachers, many of whom possess badly needed skills in mathematics and science. Some retired teachers would be willing to return to the classroom were it not for the present legislation that restricts their potential earnings. The Task Force recommends that existing legislation be modified to encourage the return to teaching, in specified areas, of retired teachers, with the recognition that some retraining will probably be necessary in order to bring their knowledge and skills up to date.

Recommendation 5

That the State Board of Education, The Board of Governors of Higher Education, and Local School Boards Provide Funds to Create or Improve Professional Development Programs for Educational Personnel.

The lifeblood of any profession is a well-trained and up-to-date force of practitioners. In our rapidly changing society, it is necessary for teachers and administrators to keep themselves current in the content, methodology and administration of the educational programs they offer. Pre-service education programs prepare individuals for *entry* into the profession, but are not sufficient to *maintain* a quality educational force. If education is to be improved, a massive training effort in all areas, but particularly in math and science, must be undertaken.

Societal changes such as fluctuating family patterns and rapidly improving technology directly influence classroom instruction and accelerate the urgency for professional development programs. Unfortunately, few districts have implemented professional development programs and too little money is presently expended on human resource development generally. In contrast, business and industry routinely invest in training to promote employee competence.

In structuring this recommendation, the Task Force recognizes the important roles of teachers and administrators in the instructional setting and underscores the importance of professional development for both groups. Because administrators play critical roles in achieving instructionally effective schools, and because administrators evaluate and guide teacher performance, their professional advancement—particularly in supervisory and administrative areas—is essential for promoting optimum teacher performance. The outcome of professional development, whether for administrators, teachers, or both groups, should be improved skills and improved communication among school personnel.

The Task Force believes that establishing and/or improving in-service training programs in every Connecticut school district demands a joint commitment from the State Board of Education, the Board of Governors of Higher Education, and local school boards, with each providing financial resources to ensure that professional development for teachers and administrators becomes an integral part of each school district's program. Connecticut, a state whose economy demands well-trained and technologically competent professionals, cannot afford to have the quality of its educational corps eroded.

Recommendation 6

That a Statewide System of Cooperative Efforts Between Business and Education be Established to Enrich the Public School Curriculum and to Provide Increased Opportunities for the Co-Employment of Teachers by the Corporate Sector and Education.

For too long, a sense of separation has characterized the worlds of business and education. Business is identified as the area where salaries are high, where equipment is modern, and where those with the highest and most relevant levels of ability naturally gravitate. In contrast, public schools are often portrayed as places that offer inadequate salaries, that possess obsolete equipment, and that attract those with modest abilities. To counteract these destructive images and to reduce the schism between business and education, continuous dialogue and collaboration between these two sectors is critical.

To that end, the Task Force recommends that a state-wide effort, initiated by the State Board of Education and representatives from business and industry, be launched. The immediate goal of the collaboration is to involve teachers in the private sector and, in so doing, to provide them with new experiences that lead to improved instruction and curriculum content.

A teacher of science working in one of the state's high-technology corporations would gain invaluable experience that could be passed on to students and other school personnel. Conversely, an editor from a newspaper or from a magazine could bring an invaluable perspective to a high school course in English. Information garnered in this way could be infused into the curriculum, giving it new vitality and relevance.

Through this involvement in business and industry, teachers can grow professionally while contributing their knowledge of instructional strategies, human motivation and human development to the business organization. An exchange of skills and information would take place, thereby breaking down the barriers between the sectors while benefiting both.

Beyond developing effective liaisons, this state-wide effort should create permanent mechanisms that foster cross-sector exchange. Opportunities for shared employment, enabling teachers to work part-time in the schools and part-time in industry, should be arranged. Tax incentives similar to those allowed when business invests in museums and public television should be legislated for such investment in public schools. Mechanisms to disseminate information regarding potential and successful business and education liaisons should be established. For example, a clearinghouse should be established for positions (either summer or part-time) in business and industry for educators, and for business executives who wish to work with school personnel.

Recommendation 7

That the State Board of Education, Working Cooperatively With the Board of Governors of Higher Education and With Local School Districts, Take Specific Steps to Attract Academically Superior High School and College Students into the Teaching Profession and to Provide Them With Teacher Preparation Programs of High Quality.

Few would disagree that Connecticut, like other states, has a crisis in the teaching of science and mathematics. In a few years there will be shortages of teachers in other subject areas, and these shortages will intensify in subsequent years as growing numbers of children enter elementary schools of the state.

Given these circumstances, it is essential to offer those now in high school or in the early years of college concrete reasons for considering teaching as a career option. Specifically, we recommend that the following steps be taken.

1. A program to attract academically superior high school students into the teaching profession should be developed by representatives from appropriate state agencies, professional associations, and local school districts.
2. A program of scholarships and forgivable loans should be instituted for qualified students in "shortage area" disciplines who plan to teach in Connecticut schools.
3. Resources should be provided to improve the quality of teacher preparation programs, and standards should be established to assure that students being admitted to and graduating from these programs are well qualified to enter the profession.
4. A statewide evaluation of the student teaching experience should be carried out. This evaluation would lay the basis for the application of uniform standards and other improvements in student teaching. It would also seek to assure that supervising teachers are appropriately trained and recompensed for their efforts.
5. A statewide beginning teacher support program should be instituted as part of the certification continuum. It would provide intensive observation and evaluation of new teachers by trained supervisors and master teachers.

Recommendation 8

That the State Allocate Resources for a Public Information Campaign Aimed at Improving the Public Image of the Teaching Profession.

Americans formulate their image of education primarily from their first-hand contact with the schools and then from the portrayal in the various media of educational issues and events. Since only twenty percent of American families now have children in school, the media have become an important source for public opinion regarding the quality of education.

To that end, the Task Force recommends that a statewide media campaign be launched immediately. The campaign must report successes of students and teachers, noting program accomplishments as well as the needs of public schools. It must also communicate the importance of quality education to individuals and to the society at large.

The Task Force is not calling for an exorbitant campaign, but one that is large enough, professional enough, and effective enough to communicate (1) that our teachers are competent, dedicated, and vital to the future of the state's economy, and (2) that they are irreplaceable as a significant force in the lives of our children.

Conclusion

The Task Force believes that we are at a critical juncture in the history of Connecticut's public schools. If the viability of teaching and of education is to be preserved, then public support, reinforced by state-sponsored efforts, is absolutely necessary.

The Task Force believes further that the recommendations in this report are the foundation for a quality teaching system in the state. In place of a perception of teaching as a profession with minimal inducements, limited opportunities, and minimal status, the Task Force, through these recommendations, seeks to substitute the perception and reality that teaching is socially valued, highly professional, and critical to the future of Connecticut. Such a public commitment will benefit each and every one of us.

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Research Reports Presented to the Task Force

1. "Teacher Quality—An Analysis of the Problem and Policy Interventions." Timothy Weaver

   Timothy Weaver is a member of the faculty of Boston University. He has written extensively on the subject of teacher quality, and teacher supply and demand.

2. "Stress and Dissatisfaction and Intention to Leave Teaching Among Experienced Connecticut High School Teachers." Dennis C. Turk and Mark D. Litt

   Dennis C. Turk is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at Yale University. He is known for his work in the areas of stress, coping and adaptation.

   Mark D. Litt is a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology at Yale. His research interests are in the relationships between physical and mental symptoms and occupational stress.

3. "Comparisons of Salaries in Education with Other Occupations: Differential Salaries and Merit Pay Programs." Mary Ellen Stanwick

   Mary Ellen Stanwick has been a researcher and writer for the Institute for Responsive Education at Yale University and a consultant to the Commission for Higher Education. She is presently an independent researcher who has prepared reports for a number of private and public agencies.

4. "Job Sharing and Shared Employment: Programs to Attract and Retain Teachers." Linda Glick and Cyndi Stern

   Linda Glick and Cyndi Stern are co-directors of Family and Career Together, an agency which implements public and private sector job sharing programs.

5. "Ten Personnel Problems Facing the Teaching Profession in Connecticut Today." Carol MacElwee

   Carol MacElwee is Director of Infoline for Southwestern Connecticut. She has been involved in personnel work, career development and adult services for a number of years.

6. "School/Business Partnerships." Walter McCann and Karen Blawie

   Walter McCann is Dean of the Barney School of Business and Public Administration at the University of Hartford. He is active in studying and writing about policy issues in education and government.

   Karen Blawie is administrative manager of operations at the Barney School. Her field of expertise is organizational behavior.

Meetings and Topics

Meeting 1

Date: September 28, 1983
Site: Yale University, New Haven, CT

Agenda

"Teacher Quality An Analysis of the Problem and Policy Interventions"—Timothy Weaver, Boston University, Boston, MA

"Stress, Dissatisfaction and Intention to Leave Teaching Among Experienced Connecticut High School Teachers"—Dennis C. Turk, Yale University, New Haven, CT

Meeting 2

Date: December 6, 1983
Site: University of Hartford, West Hartford, CT

Agenda

"Comparison of Salaries In Education with Other Occupations; Differential Salaries and Merit Pay"—Mary Ellen Stanwick

"Job Sharing and Shared Employment: Problems to Attract and Retain Quality Teachers"—Cyndi Stern and Linda Glick; Family and Career Together

Meeting 3

Date: January 27, 1983
Site: Union Carbide Corporation, Danbury, CT

Agenda

"Ten Personnel Problems Facing the Teaching Profession in Connecticut Today"—Carol MacElwee, Infoline of Southwestern Connecticut, Norwalk, CT
Discussion of Task Force Recommendations

Meeting 4

Date: March 8, 1983
Site: Hartford Chamber of Commerce, Hartford, CT

Agenda

1. "School-Business Partnerships," Walter McCann and Karen Blawie, University of Hartford, West Hartford, CT
2. Continuing discussion of recommendations

Meeting 5

Date: May 25, 1983
Site: General Electric Corporation, Fairfield, CT

Agenda

1. Final Discussion of recommendations

Submission of Final Report to State Board of Education: September, 1983.